

Guidance for Early Childhood Transitions

Successful transitions require more than just ensuring children have the necessary academic and social skills. They depend on connections made between children, teachers, and families through continued communication, collaboration, and cooperation. It is important to acknowledge and understand a child’s current level of development based on their previous learning experiences in order to assist children in the next transition.

Transitions During COVID-19

As a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, children and families in Louisiana may be experiencing more frequent transitions than what is typical. This may include life transitions, such as a change in employment or housing, and it may also include transitions between different early childhood settings for children. During periods of transition, children may experience feelings of uncertainty or instability and may rely on adults to provide support and guidance. For this reason, it is more critical than ever to ensure transitions are smooth, successful, and in coordination between different early childhood care, education, and service providers.

Developing a Transition Process

When early childhood programs, schools, communities, and families all work together in collaboration to transition children from one early childhood setting to another, or from early childhood into kindergarten, they are all better equipped with the information and skills they need to make that transition successful.

Guiding questions to support successful transitions:

- Who will be involved in the transition? (e.g., early childhood programs, school administrators, teachers, family members, counselors, service providers, etc.)
- What is the type of transition? (e.g., school, setting, school outage, etc.)
- Who facilitates the transition planning process and meetings? (e.g., lead teacher or teacher)
- What should the meeting focus on in order for the child to have a successful transition? (e.g., child strengths, areas for growth, plan for interagency collaboration, etc.).
- What will be the next steps? (e.g., schedule follow-up meetings, invite relevant interagency stakeholders, determine a timeline for a timeline, etc.)
- What activities are best suited for the child and family? What will the timeline for transitional activities be?

Communities should work with early childhood programs and schools to develop a timeline of events and dedicated activities that support early childhood transitions. A high-quality transition plan will include a variety of activities for families to do with children, activities for teachers to do with children, and a culminating event for families and programs/schools to do together with children.

Example Activities to Support Successful Transitions

In a typical transition (e.g., moving to the next setting, new school, etc.)	In a school or center interruption transition (e.g., natural disasters, pandemic, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the new teacher to visit the program and explain the new setting children will experience • Visit the new site and visit the classroom/setting • Contact a local elementary school that has a “transition team” and join if possible • Create a bulletin board about the new classroom using pictures and comments from children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teachers to contact the family by phone, email, or text to plan for dedicated transition activities • Encourage teachers to schedule family check-ins during school and site outages as a form of support as children transition between settings • Share children’s portfolios with parents or future teachers

Additional Resources: [Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, Transitions](#) provides tips, calendars, and videos to support early childhood transitions for infants, toddlers, pre-K, and kindergarten.